

**Points Which Suggest Broadening of Proposed Legislation
Making the Assassination of the President or Vice President
of the United States a Federal Crime (H. R. 6097)**

1. There is no quarrel with the proposed legislation as it relates to attempts on the lives of the President or Vice President.
2. It is entirely possible that assassination or attempted assassination of other high officials could be the result of a Communist or other conspiracy by unfriendly forces.

3. Many of the points propounded during the House debate on
(C.R. P. 13597, Aug. 21 JUNE 1965)
H. R. 6097 with respect to attempts on the life of the President or Vice
President are also applicable to attempts on the lives of other high officials
such as members of the Cabinet, other officials who are appointed by the
President and members of the President's immediate staff. They include
the following:

- a. Such acts are essentially an offense against the United States Government.
- b. Motivation for such attacks is usually the result of anger at the manner in which the individual performs his official duties or hostility toward the office which the individual holds or the United States Government or the American system of democracy.
- c. Primary responsibility and final authority for the investigation and prosecution of attacks on the lives of high officials

should be placed in the hands of Federal authorities. (The actual investigation of offenses covered by the statute should be conducted by Federal law enforcement officials. Where the assistance of state or local agencies proved necessary or desirable, it would be under the direction of the Federal agencies involved.)

d. The detention and protection of any suspects should be the responsibility of Federal law enforcement officers.

e. Adequate transcripts of the proceedings would be preserved by the authorities who conducted them. (Many state and local authorities do not preserve them.)

f. Such a bill would resolve any doubts concerning jurisdiction and provide the Federal Government with clear responsibility.

g. Many state and local laws are not adequate to deal with crimes of such national and international significance.

4. In addition to the points discussed in the preceding paragraphs the important--if not overriding--consideration of national security is involved.

5. An attack against some other individual (such as a member of the President's staff) may be the result of a misguided conspiracy against the President or Vice President. (Many high officials--the Secretary of State,

the Secretary of Defense, the Director of Central Intelligence, the Director of the Federal Bureau of Investigation and Mr. McGeorge Bundy to name a few--possess, in their minds and on their persons, information of vital importance to our national security.) The investigation of attempts on the lives of these officials should not be left to state and local authorities.

6. Federal jurisdiction may be waived if appropriate Federal officials conclude, on the basis of Federal investigation, that the assassination or attempted assassination was not an act which in any way involved the Federal Government or the execution of official duties by the individual involved.

CONCLUSIONS

1. Serious consideration of the points raised in this paper should not be deferred, but should be included in the consideration of the merits of H. R. 6097 or other similar legislation.

2. Careful consideration should be given to who should be included in the legislation. Several alternatives are:

- a. Members of the Cabinet
- b. All Federal officials appointed by the President, by and with the advice and consent of the Senate.
- c. Those included in b. above plus the personal staffs

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